

Joseph
GREAT PLAINNESS NECESSARY IN DELIVERING
THE GOSPEL-MESSAGE WITH A PROSPECT OF
SUCCESS. *6325*

A
S E R M O N,
DELIVERED AT THE
I N S T A L L A T I O N

OF THE
divided into 10 stanzas and 100 lines
REV. SAMUEL TOMB,
Rev. Samuel Tomb
TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN
NEWBURY, Nov. 28, 1798.

BY WILLIAM PIDGIN, A. M. *K*
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Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.
Apostle PAUL.

NEWBURYPORT:
PRINTED BY EDMUND MARCH BLUNT.

1799.

GREAT TALKERS NEED BY IN DELIVERING
THE GOSPEL MESSAGE WITH A REQUEST OF



N. B. Some things, omitted in the delivery of this discourse
through want of time, are here inserted, which the candid reader
will readily excuse.

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2. SAMUEL, xii. 7.

AND NATHAN SAID TO DAVID, THOU ART THE MAN.

NEVER, perhaps, had one man a more solemn message to deliver to another than Nathan had to David in this instance.

Although David was a man after God's own heart, and divinely appointed king over his people Israel, yet, we may venture to assert, of none are such shocking iniquities left on sacred record, as of him. This while it affords a warning for the righteous in every age, does not in the least excuse them, when found guilty.

In the instance before us, David had most unlawfully taken the wife of Uriah, and because he could not conceal his guilt, had caused him to be put to death. Thus murder and adultery became the crimes with which he was chargeable.—These aggravated crimes were highly provoking to the God of holiness. He beheld them with indignation. Nathan, therefore, is divinely commissioned to sound in the ears of David an alarming report, that he may be awakened hereby to confession and repentance; for he was now, it appears, sleeping in his iniquity.—Nathan, instructed of God, went well furnished to perform his errand. He knew how to take the wise in their own craftiness: as must be fully evident, when we look into the sermon which he preached to his royal hearer, and

and consider his application, which naturally follows. *And the Lord sent Nathan unto David ; and he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city ; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds : But the poor man had nothing save one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished up : and it grew up together with him and with his children : it did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the way-fairing man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.*

When Nathan had thus uttered the body of his discourse, it seems, he made some pause ; gave David an opportunity to reply ; and, perhaps, he thought that a person of such discernment would at once see his intention, and there would be no necessity that he should be more particular or pointed.—But alas ! the deceitful, the infatuating nature of sin !—David, with all his wisdom did not, at this time, know himself. He readily saw the horrid crime of the rich man in Nathan's parable, and deeply incensed at it, denounced against him immediate and inevitable death : but he saw not himself involved in this description. His mind was sadly blinded. The prophet, therefore, was put to the painful necessity of applying his discourse *plainly*, otherwise it was likely to have no good effect.—*Thou art the man*, said Nathan who hath done this. *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hands of Saul : And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah ; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight ? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house.*

Nathan

Nathan having told him his transgression in this plain manner, and the punishment he was doomed to suffer because of it, *David said, I have sinned against the Lord.* He freely acknowledged his guilt, and was ready to take to himself the condemnation of death.

The text and context thus viewed will naturally furnish us with the following leading proposition, as the subject of discourse on this occasion, viz.

That such is the moral blindness and insensibility of men, that it is necessary for ministers to use great plainness in delivering to them the gospel-message with any good prospect of success.

The speaker would remark, that he is far from presuming to dictate a mode of preaching to his fathers, and brethren in the ministry. It is his wish and aim only to offer his own opinion with freedom and candour upon a subject of the last importance; a subject which so nearly concerns the everlasting weal or woe of the souls of men. This, he flatters himself, will be disagreeable to none, who has the least sincere desire of turning many to righteousness, and thus of shining forever as distinguished stars in the firmament of divine glory.

To proceed, then, according to the proposition.

Men are prone to look upon their own character with a partial eye, and to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. They quickly perceive when others do amiss, but in respect to themselves they have little or no discerning. They see not their own picture, when clearly and fully drawn to their view; and will not think it resembles them, unless positively told it does in the plainest terms. So unwilling are they to think their own conduct wrong, that when it is painted before them in the most striking light, they are ready to apply it to others; and hastily condemn *them* while themselves are the persons criminal. Thus instead of considering that a *beam is in their own eye*, they would fain discover a *mote in the eye of their brother*. Such is naturally the disposition of mankind, and such the turn which sin has given to the human mind. Experience and observation must have shown

shewn us all the truth of these remarks ; and scripture examples fully confirm them. The case of David just noticed, seems sufficient for this, even did the Bible contain nothing more of a similar nature.

David, we have every reason to suppose, was a man of no common or inferior abilities. Without doubt his penetrating judgment, his clearness of perception, and wisdom of discernment were far above the level of men in general : This we must conclude from his advanced station, and the many advantages attending it. Add to all these the special grace of God, with which his mind was richly furnished. Under all these superior endowments and advantages, David must be considered as a person eminently qualified to hear divine truth, and make right application of it. And one would have thought, that a word to a person of his talents would be sufficient ;—that a mere hint would answer the purpose. But it was found quite the reverse. He had foolishly forsaken God, and was left to sink in the mire of his own guilty pollution. His conscience was at this time put to silence, and the gracious principle within him was stifled. He had lost his great Head ; his strength was consequently gone ; and he was like other men, save only that his superior judgment and understanding remained. This evidently appears to have been his melancholy situation, when Nathan came to him ; for otherwise, how could he be so insensible to his aggravated impiety ! The prophet finding his condition to be such, was inclined to catch him, as it were, with guile. He knew him to be still capable of judging between right and wrong, although so blinded respecting himself ; he therefore related his conduct in the person of another. He told him of a man who had done thus and so. David immediately discovered the wickedness of this man's deed, and declared what his fate should be.

Now had Nathan left the matter here ; had he gone his way and said no more ; we cannot see that what he had already said would have been of much benefit to his hearer, for his meaning was not taken. The person to whom

whom he spake was still in darkness as to his own state. But Nathan did not mean to leave him so. He was sent to be an instrument for awakening him from his stupor, and he intended that nothing should fail through his unfaithfulness. When, therefore, he saw that the parable in itself had not the desired effect, he explained and applied it. He told David that he was the person who had done thus wickedly ; and laid before him a particular statement of the crimes which he had committed, and the circumstances which rendered them singularly heinous. This plain dealing, these home truths made him sensibly feel their force. And what was the consequence ? He began to come to himself. He found where he was. His guilt stared him in the face. He saw himself condemned out of his own mouth. In no way could he justify himself. Indeed, he had no disposition to attempt this. Nathan had stated facts so clearly and pungently, that conviction at once flashed upon his mind. He confessed his sin before the Lord. And from what the prophet afterwards said to him, it appears, he was willing to abide the sentence which he had uttered against one of his character. But Nathan told him he should not die, for the Lord had put away his sin ; and declared what judgments should come upon him, and upon his family, for his iniquity.

What could more directly prove the truth of the proposition before us than the things now mentioned ? If the renowned king of Israel, a man greatly favoured of God, with all his sagacity, must have truths closely pressed to his conscience, in order to find them applicable to himself, and in order to his being profited by them ; then we may, it is thought, safely conclude that the same is necessary for all hearers of the gospel now. Nathan might have repeated parable after parable to David, but it does not appear that they would have been of any real advantage to him, unless he had said, *Thou art the man*. This plain sentence struck him more powerfully than all things else which he said. So ministers may describe the *general* character of wicked men once and again, but unless they

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take some method to let their hearers know that *they* are *these* wicked persons, and show in what their wickedness consists, it will not be likely to profit them, or effectually impress their minds. They will be inclined to apply the description to others, instead of taking it to themselves.

The speaker would not be understood here as in the least insinuating, that ministers *are sufficient of themselves* to say *any thing as of themselves* which shall be savingly profitable to their hearers. All their *sufficiency is of God*. His Spirit alone can crown their labours with success. But this can in no degree lessen their solemn obligations to faithfulness and plainness in warning their people, by declaring to them their sinfulness, and what must await them without repentance. For unless they are thus faithful and plain in their addresses, they can have no ground for expecting the Spirit's influence to accompany their endeavors ; nor will what they deliver have a tendency to affect the heart, but will leave it insensible as before.

That men are by nature morally blind and insensible the scriptures of truth are full in declaring. As a full demonstration of this, we need only hear it said of them, that they *have the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart : being past feeling : And that they seeing, see not : and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. They are foolish children, and they have none understanding : they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib : but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.*

That because of this moral blindness and insensibility of men great plainness is to be used in delivering to them the gospel-message, is no less a dictate of *reason* than of *revelation*. It is obvious, that blind persons must have plain and particular descriptions, or they will not understand ; and persons insensible to a great degree must have direct and pointed things, or they will not feel. But let us recur to the law and to the testimony. The precepts and examples of inspiration are binding. The divine com-
mission

mission to Isaiah was, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Israel their sins*: that is, describe their transgressions so clearly and fully as that they cannot but see them. *Spare not* through fear or favor. The message from God to Ezekiel was, *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die: and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life: the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity: but his blood will I require at thine hand.* Most weighty was the motive here held before the prophet for being plain and pungent in addressing the people of his charge. It is recorded of the people in Isaiah's time, that they *said to the seers see not: and to the prophets, prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits.* It is evident, that this blind and insensible people wished not to have plain and pointed things told them, lest they should be constrained to see and feel: they therefore desired the prophets to go directly aside from their duty. In the Apostle Peter we have a direct example of plainness in preaching and the happy effects of it. *Ye men of Israel, said he, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain.*———*Know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. And we find, that they did repent, and were savingly converted, to the number of three thousand.*

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We may next come to the perfect exemplar of all.

Christ, who must be acknowledged the standard of preaching, and the great pattern for all who publish his gospel, spake to his hearers in the plainest and most direct terms. His admirable sermon upon the mount was close and searching, aimed directly at the heart, and excellently adapted to expose its hidden iniquity. It shows clearly and fully the insufficiency of all outward forms and rites in religion, while inward, vital piety, is neglected ; and thus it was directly suited to detect the characters and conduct of the self-approving Pharisees, who regarded only the externals of divine worship. The hypocrisy, the worldly-mindedness, the rash and censorious spirit, of many of his audience are pointedly spoken against in this sermon of Jesus. When he was preaching to some who *trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others*, he delivered the parable of the Pharisee and Publican ; than which nothing could be better calculated to humble their pride and self-conceit. Christ not only gave a general description of the Scribes and Pharisees, when he preached to them, but expressly and repeatedly said to them, *Ye fools and blind : and wo unto you ye blind guides :* and he plainly told them wherefore he denounced this woe. Having uttered something which his disciples wished him to explain, he said unto them, *Are ye also yet without understanding ?* Although he had a tender regard for Martha, yet when she complained to him of her sister, he utters this sharp rebuke, *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.* Hence, it appears, that the disciples of Christ, as well as others, must have great plainness used with them, or *he* would not in his preaching have dealt so plainly. He perfectly knew what was necessary and best on all occasions. He knew, that however wise men might be respecting things of this world, yet in things of a truly religious nature, they were but mere fools. He therefore called them so. *O fools, and slow of heart*, said he to the two disciples, *to believe all that the prophets have spoken.*

It is said of Christ as a preacher, that *he spake as one having authority.* He spoke at once to the consciences of them

them who heard him : accordingly, it is said of some to whom he spake, that *being convinced by their own conscience, they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last.* He told his hearers their wickedness without any reserve, and the punishment it merited. He described their different characters so justly and particularly, that each individual must see himself intended in the description, and must know whether he belonged to the class of saints or to the class of sinners. He addressed all according to their various conditions. To hardened sinners he was a *son of thunder.* His language to these was,—*Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* To sinners seriously awakened he was a *son of consolation.* To such he spake in loving accents : *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* To his true followers his speech was graciously kind and condescending, when he found them walking in the truth : *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven.* In a word ; so particular was Christ to the several sorts of persons that composed his auditory, that a *Thou art the man* came home to the bosom of each of them. He meant to exhibit divine truth so clearly and distinctly, that by the light of it all should discover their true situation. And in this he hath left an example for all who go out in his name.

A number of

INFERENCES,

Suggested by the subject, shall now be considered.

1. It is a plain inference from the subject, that ministers *ought* to be particular and direct in addressing their hearers, or in applying to them the truths they deliver. If Nathan did no more than his duty in saying to David,
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Thou art the man : thou hast transgressed in so many instances, and *despised the commandment of the Lord* : *thou hast killed Uriah, &c.* If John the baptist did no more than his duty in calling some of his hearers, a *generation of vipers* : If the Apostle Paul did no more than his duty in his plain speeches to the Romans, Galatians, and others :

If Christ himself, who could not but do right, is to be imitated in this respect ; then assuredly it is the duty of ministers to be faithful in the manner stated. They may and ought, as the foundation of their discourses, to explain and establish some doctrinal truths. This they may do from the example of Nathan who first delivered a parable to prepare the way for what followed. But like him, they must in the improvement suitably apply these truths to all present, that they may find themselves concerned in them, and that they were designed for their benefit. They should be so explicit and searching in the application, as to make it amount to the words of the text.

2. From the view just taken, in connection with the subject at large, may be inferred a good, and, perhaps, the best method of preaching. Nathan did not in the very beginning of his discourse, as the first salutation, say to David—*Thou art the man*. Had he done *this*, it might have greatly provoked the royal personage. It is not to be supposed, that the king would have given a favorable reception to such home-language *immediately* advanced, before any thing had been said which might introduce it. The prophet, it seems, was aware of this. He therefore, like a wise preacher, first aimed in his discourse to prepare the mind of his hearer for receiving truth. He represented his conduct by a plain similitude. The flagrant injustice and cruelty of the conduct thus represented, David could not but at once condemn. Nathan knew he had now only to apply the similitude, and his point was gained. This he could easily do, for he had only to let David see, that his own conduct was like that which he had condemned, and the work was done. So if gospel preachers would be in the way most effectual for bringing their hearers to feel, acknowledge and embrace the truth,

truth, let them not *immediately* and directly describe their wickedness with all its aggravations. This will be likely to irritate rather than profit. Let them first give such a general and plain description of moral conduct as shall be suited to convince the consciences of all respecting what is sin and what is holiness. And when the conscience is thus convinced, and brought to own and receive general truths, it cannot consistently but own and receive particular truths contained in, and inferred from them. When ministers so adapt the body of their discourses, as that the people, while they do not see themselves intended, are constrained to acknowledge and approve what is morally right, and censure what is morally wrong ; the application becomes forcible and irresistible. The hearers find themselves condemned of their own consciences, and are obliged inwardly to confess their guilty deserts.

This view is suited to reprove, on the one hand, those sermons which are *direct* and *pointed* from beginning to end, and which instead of *benefiting*, needlessly *offend* and prejudice the mind against the truth ; and on the other hand, it is suited to reprove those discourses which are *general* throughout, and which come not *near* the hearers, but suffer them to *feel* and *think* as if they were not in the least concerned in what had been said. This is going to either extreme, while the medium is to be chosen. The *parable* and the *Thou art the man*, make a good composition for a profitable sermon, while either alone will be found wanting.

3. We infer from what has been said, that if it be the duty of Ministers to be particular and direct in applying the truths they deliver, then surely it is the duty of hearers candidly to receive these truths, and not take unreasonable offence because of their plainness. We are not told that David was offended because Nathan used with him such great plainness. No : he received it cordially : he felt its force ; and freely confessed the justness of the charge brought against him. In this he is a pattern for all who hear the word preached in its power and pungency. They should hear it with meekness, knowing that
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it may become the means of saving their souls, if they do not wilfully reject it. It is a sad mark indeed, when people wish to hear *smooth things* to be *daubed with untempered mortar* : and are opposed to searching gospel-truths. This was the character of most of the Jews in the time of Christ. He was too penetrating for them : *his words pierced like swords*. Ye, said he to them, *are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do*. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. He that is of God heareth God's words : ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Thus closely did Christ address them. But instead of receiving it calmly, and owning it altogether just, they replied, *say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil ?* They were ignorant and blind in respect to spiritual things ; and were disposed to cavil at, and reject the most precious and interesting truths. These Jews were most unreasonable and wicked in this respect. Their conduct was directly the reverse from what it ought to have been. They opposed the only Saviour, and injured their own souls. And most ardently could it be wished that none might imitate them at the present day. It is undeniably the duty of Ministers to be discriminating and searching. This is evident from what has been said, that they can have no good prospect of success, unless they are. And that they may be successful, should be the earnest desire of *them* and of *all*. If *this*, then, be the incumbent and indispensable duty of Ministers, it must of course be the incumbent and indispensable duty of hearers to receive bible-truths in the love of them, however much they may expose their wickedness. Had David been angry with the prophet, and greatly opposed his plain message, how would he have added sin to sin, and brought tenfold more guilt upon his own soul. But he was far from this : His conscience smote him, and he owned the fact. Thus should all do, when they hear truths applicable to themselves. But as God formerly said to his prophet Ezekiel, *so is he now saying to his Ministers, Thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, for they are most rebellious*.

4. We infer from the subject, that we have great cause to lament that men are *so* blind and insensible in things which pertain to godliness, as to *need* such plainness,—such close application of gospel-truths, in order to see their own picture. It is the *character*, the moral blindness and weakness of men, which makes plain and pointed truths so *necessary*. Had Israel's king taken the meaning of Nathan, after he had spoken the parable ; applied it to himself ; appeared penitent ; and acknowledged his several instances of transgression ; the prophet would not have been constrained to say to him as in the text : he would have found no *need* for this. But when he had told him the story of the poor and rich man ; as David continued still insensible respecting himself, what must the prophet do ? He was sent to him for *good*, and he wished to be instrumental of doing *this*. But how shall he come to the king's heart ? for unless he does this, he is not likely to benefit him. He would gladly use delicacy and tenderness with a person of such exalted office and rank. He wishes not to be thought too rash or severe, if mild measures will answer. He seems desirous that he may take the *hint*, may see and repent of his error ; without being told how bad he is in the *plainest* terms possible. But *all* will not do. Nathan is brought to see, that he must either leave his mind *unimpressed* with a sense of his condition, or declare to him his meaning freely and fully without the least palliation. This no doubt was a disagreeable dilemma. But he knew he must perform the mission he had received from God. He chose to be a faithful servant of his great Master, and submit the event to him. Alas ! David, how great must be thy stupidity at this time, that nothing will bring thee to thy right senses but a *Thou art the man !* As the conduct of David, and his insensibility respecting it, *obliged* Nathan to preach thus closely, so the conduct and insensibility of hearers in general *now* must *oblige* preachers to do the same. As David was quick to discern and censure the sinfulness of another, without considering his own ; so most hearers can quickly see the faults of others, and what

truths belong to them, while *themselves* are *clear*, and no part of the discourse suits their own case. This obliges Ministers to say in effect, you are the persons meant, you are the guilty. *Obliges*, did I say? Yes; a sense of duty obliges them to this. For it is no agreeable thing in itself to tell sinners without reserve what is their character. But *this* must be done. And it is truly to be lamented, that it is with such difficulty the mind of man is brought to look in upon itself, and see its condition:—that all can so hastily condemn others for that which they allow in themselves, and discover the failings of others so much sooner than their own.

5. We may infer from the subject what is the great *design* of the Gospel-ministry. It is to awaken sinners to a sense of their iniquities, and bring them to *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*. Agreeably we find Paul commissioned to the Gentiles for this important end, *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*. From this it is evident, that moral blindness is removed; saving conviction excited; spiritual freedom effected; and regeneration accomplished, through the instrumentality of Gospel-preaching. All men by nature, or in their un-sanctified condition, are as insensible to their true character and ill-deserts as transgressors of the divine law, as David was to *his*, when the prophet approached him. They *discern not the things of the Spirit of God*. And as the Lord sent Nathan to David for the express design of convincing and converting him; so *He* raises up, qualifies, and sends his Ministers to be ambassadors for him, and instrumental in the conviction and conversion of sinful men. The ministry of the word is designed in the hand of the Holy Spirit to *enlighten* the minds of men, that they may see that they have sinned, and what they deserve as sinners, and in this way become truly penitent and reformed.

Deeply

Deeply impressed by this momentous design of their mission, how careful, how anxiously concerned should Ministers be, that they be found faithful messengers ; that they fulfil the ministry which they have received of the Lord ! What diligent heed ought they to take, that the design of their message may not fail by their means ! Are they sent *to warn the wicked of his wicked way, that he turn from it ?* let them do it faithfully and plainly, that they may deliver their own souls, and that the *blood of him who dieth in his iniquity may not be required at their hand.*

Let them fully describe the state and danger of sinners, and like Nathan, apply the description to the hearts of their hearers with the greatest plainness. In thus doing, they have encouragement to hope for success ; and in thus doing, they will finally be clear from the blood of all men, even should *Israel not be gathered.*

My *Friend* and *Brother* will suffer me a word at this serious moment.

It is presumed, *Dear Sir*, that you have cordially acquiesced in the leading sentiments, which have now been advanced. You know, we trust, by experience, the moral blindness and insensibility of the human heart, until enlightened and quickened by divine grace. You are accordingly convinced, that great plainness is necessary in publishing to your hearers the Gospel-report. For although Ministers may use this plainness, and still not be successful, yet none can have a well grounded hope of successfulness without it. As you desire, therefore, to succeed in your Master's work, you will aim plainly and faithfully to declare his message ; directly applying the truths you deliver to the cases of all who hear them. For doing *this*, you have the Prophets, the Apostles, and Christ himself, as examples. And in *this* way, you will, *by clear manifestation of the truth, commend yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God :* in this way, you may *both save yourself, and them that hear you :* and in this way, we wish you the blessing of the *God of Jacob* in your person, and in the people now about to become your charge.

The

The church and congregation in this place will allow me briefly to address them on this solemn occasion.

Brethren and Friends,

Accept our sincere congratulations on the re-settlement of the Gospel-ministry among you. Receive the man of your choice as a prophet sent you from the Lord. Consider him as having a mission from his divine Master which he is bound to discharge : And while his wisdom and prudence shall direct him in the faithful discharge of it, be careful to give his message a cordial reception. If he shall find it his duty to use *great plainness of speech*, take not unreasonable offence ; for it is for your *good*. Even should he use the direct language of the text in applying his discourses, you have the example of David for receiving it with meekness, and feeling its force and justice. Think him no more than man, *subject to like passions* with others ; and ever be ready to cast the mantle of charity over those human imperfections which are inseparable from men, in their present lapsed condition. *Esteem him highly in love for his work's sake, and strive together with him in your prayers to God for him.* Thus may he be a rich and lasting blessing to you, and you become his joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

Permit me to observe here, that your connection with our order is of recent date. You were received, at your free request, upon the conviction that a sense of duty and propriety dictated your choice of the presbyterian mode. A strict and persevering adherence to the form you have adopted will manifest to an observing world the uprightness of your intentions, and must give unspeakable satisfaction to the body, with which you are now connected. May you and your Pastor long walk together in *truth and love*, and finally be admitted to *light, life, and felicity* without end.

The relation of a brief but true story to this assembly at large, will conclude.

A certain great King had an only son, tenderly beloved. The subjects of this King had revolted from him, and taken arms against his throne and government ; without
any

any other cause but that of their own free, criminal choice. This was a crime so great, that the King could pardon them in no other way, but by delivering his son to death for their redemption. This he did, and the son freely consented to the will of his Father. The way being thus clear to receive the rebels again to favor, the King invites them in the most tender manner to lay aside their rebellious weapons, and return to him ; offering them complete happiness on this return. But they refuse this kind invitation ; they continue still rebellious. Now, must not all say, that *they* deserve the greatest conceivable punishment, not only for their revolt, but for their black ingratitude in refusing a pardon ! Let as many, then, as have not yet given cordial and saving belief to the Gospel-report, make the application to themselves. They are the persons guilty. They are still in a state of revolt from God, and neglecters of the great redemption purchased by the death of Jesus. Let them at once feel and confess their guilt before the Lord, and humbly implore his pardoning mercy ; so that they may yet *be found of him in peace, at the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

A M E N.

THE

T H E
RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

ALTHOUGH the great object of the christian religion, as it respects mankind, is to rescue them from wo and restore them to God and happiness : and although all its real friends and especially its ministers, have this object so much in view and at heart, as to readily deny themselves many innocent gratifications to accomplish it : yet this divine religion from the first promulgation of it down through the long succession of eighteen centuries, has met and been obliged to struggle with incessant and various *opposition*.

Strange to relate, it is openly neglected, opposed and despised by some whole greatest good it seeks to promote, and who can enjoy no real good, but by its aid. And in some instances it is injured and wounded by its professed, if not its real friends.

Of this *opposition* to religion, in all its possible forms and attitudes, the adorable Author was not ignorant. And being the truth and omniscient, and not capable of deceiving mankind or his followers, gave early and public notice of it. And having the government of all things in heaven, upon the earth, and under the earth committed to him, and being wonderful in counsel, he at the same time provided both for the defence of his religion, and the support of his servants. Declaring that the gates of hell should never prevail against it. Bidding his little flock not to fear, for to them it was his Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom.

All the support, relief and consolation implied in this declaration and promise, the church and its true ministers may depend upon receiving.

And

And the giving the Right-Hand of Fellowship is in an important sense a pledge and assurance to the party receiving it, of participating in the all-sufficiency of grace.

But as the wickedness of the human heart, and the devices of the adversary are many and great, so great that men may think themselves friends to Jesus Christ, and promoting his cause, while in reality they are inadvertently or ignorantly doing things contrary to both ; the possibility of this, suggesteth the propriety of proceeding on such an occasion, and in such an act as the present, with caution and a degree of fear.

The church and its officers, are not authorized to give the Right-Hand of Fellowship indiscriminately to every one who may desire it. Nor upon any other principles than those upon which the Apostles gave it. Nor may they forbear upon an exhibition of such principles.

When James, Cephas, and John who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto Paul, i. e. had suitable evidence of his qualifications to preach the Gospel, they gave to him and Barnabas the Right-Hand of Fellowship, that they should go to the heathens, while themselves continued with the circumcision.

It is grace that qualifies the subject to receive, and the exhibition of that grace, authorizes him to claim, and the ministers of Christ to give the Right-Hand of Fellowship. Nor can it be doubted, but that the Apostles, readily and with sentiments of the most lively joy, gave the Right-Hand of Fellowship to those their fellow-servants, who were partakers of the same grace of God with themselves.

And now, Sir, we the professed friends and servants of Jesus Christ, convened on this occasion, having satisfactory evidence, that you have received the gift of grace, and are qualified to preach the gospel and be a minister of his church, give you the Right-Hand of Fellowship.

Hereby we publickly acknowledge you completely invested with the sacred office of a minister of Jesus Christ : and equal in all respects with ourselves ; as the pastor of this church, and the teacher of this people. And we engage

page to support and defend you in this character, to be tender of and faithful to it. To mourn when it suffers, and rejoice when it prospers.

These engagements are reciprocal.

We bid you God speed.

We congratulate you, Sir, in being a member, a distinguished member of the most ancient, useful, and so the most honorable society that ever did or can exist upon the earth. A society, whose principles, manners, and final object, as they needed not, so they have not sought to hide themselves in the darkness of the night, or in the clouds of secrecy ; but to expose themselves to the public eye, inviting the strictest examination, like a fair and magnificent city upon a hill. A society whose good every event will advance ; whose happiness and glory will be perfected and rendered permanent by *that* which will eternally dissolve and obliterate all other societies and combinations of men, of nations, and of nature.

We congratulate you, Sir, in being a member of the general assembly and church of the first-born of God : composed of Prophets, Apostles, and all the excellent of the earth. All who are to be made kings and Priests to God. And those who turn many to righteousness, to shine as stars forever. A society to which the *Lord of all* hath made the affecting promise of " Lo I am with you always."

These are some of the materials which form the broad ground of support and strong consolation to every true christian and minister. In the view of which, all the labors, afflictions, and sufferings of which religion can be the occasion, are not only light, but vanish in a moment.

May you, Sir, ever possess the wisdom which cometh down from above, and conduct yourself among this people, as becometh a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus. That you may not merit blame, but the honor of being gentle, enjoy the pleasure of a successful, and reap the reward of a faithful minister of Jesus Christ.

THE CHARGE,
BY REV. WILLIAM MORISON
OF LONDONDERRY, (N. H.)

Dear Brother,

THE glorious Head of the church, who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, holding the seven stars in his right hand, having seen fit, in his all-wise, governing providence, to release you from the particular obligations you were under in another part of his vineyard ; and having inclined this people to call you, to take the pastoral office over them, and at the same time disposed your heart to accept their invitation ;—and this Presbytery, after the most candid attention to this people's request, having received them under their care, and sustained your Call, as orderly and regular ? I now, in behalf of this Presbytery, and by the authority of Christ, vested in them, do charge you, as the ordained Minister of the 2d Church and parish in Newbury, in manner following :—

First, with all solemnity I charge you to preach the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power ; that your people's faith may stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. In doing this, you will study plainness of speech and pathetic affection of mind, in all good fidelity, that your hearers may be fed with knowledge and understanding, and impressed with the importance of the truths of God.

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Shun the declaration of no part of the counsel of God. Particularly hold up to view the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity ;—the Sovereignty of God over all things in all worlds ;—his boundless benevolence, with his inflexible justice ;—his spotless purity, and his tender mercies in Christ, which are over all his other works. Unfold to your hearers the depravity of the human heart ; the necessity of regeneration, and the only way of justification, through faith in the imputed righteousness of the glorious Mediator.

Often dwell with delight on the comfortable doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, as founded on the stability of that covenant which is well ordered in all things and sure. And while you teach that without faith in the blood of this covenant, it is impossible to please God ; affirm also constantly that they who believe in God, must be careful to maintain good works ; and that a visible conformity to the law of God is a better evidence of real religion than any *internal pretences* whatever, without it.

I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and kingdom ;—preach the word, be instant in season and out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine ;—shewing yourself to be a workman, who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to every one their portion of meat in due season.

In doing this complicated and delightful part of your duty, you will suit yourself to the various capacities and necessities of your hearers. You will charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God ; that they do good,—be rich in good works,—ready to distribute,—willing to communicate. Enjoin upon those in the lower stations of life, obedience to their superiors ; not answering again, but endeavoring to please in all things.

Exhort young people to be soberminded,—to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. In all things

things shew thyself a pattern of good works ; in doctrine, uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity and sound speech that cannot be condemned, that they who are of the contrary party may have no evil thing to say of you.

Under impressions of divine authority, administer the Sacraments of the New Testament to persons properly or visibly qualified. Know therefore the state of your flock. — Visit the sick and afflicted, — the fatherless and widows ; and imitate your Master, who in the days of his flesh, went about among his people, doing good. As far as in you lies, be like feet to the lame, strength to the weak, eyes to the blind, leading them like a good shepherd, in the green pastures and by the still waters of God's ordinances. Administer the government of Christ's house with prudence and impartiality, knowing no man after the flesh, — not respecting persons in judgment. Avoid foolish questions which gender strife and alienation of mind. Remember, that the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle and courteous to all men. It is an important part of the ministerial character to keep our own passions in due submission, and to prevent our minds from being unreasonably ruffled, or agitated by the disagreeable occurrences of life.

A Minister's mind is supported by principle and improved by experience.

This is a kind of self-possession which will enable us to bear hardships, to surmount difficulties, to vanquish temptations ; and with steady hands and undaunted hearts, to persevere in the christian warfare as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. It is under the influence of this temper of mind, that we are strengthened to overcome evil with good ; to profit them who hate and oppose us, and peradventure to deliver them out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him at his pleasure. Agreeably to this, the wise man informs us, he that is slow to wrath, is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his Spirit than he that taketh a city.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Lay hands suddenly on no man.

man. Keep thyself pure. Give thyself to prayer, to reading, to exhortation and to doctrine. Be an example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all.

In fine, dear brother, study to glorify God in being wise to win souls, and have continual recourse to him in whom treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid; in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, and in whom all faithful ministers are compleat for work and warfare. Be then faithful unto death, and he will give you a crown of life, and many we hope, in this place, as present seals of your ministry, and your crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

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